

**Department of Health Care Services  
Proposed Trailer Bill Legislation**

**Doula Services Implementation Evaluation**

**FACT SHEET**

**Issue Title: Doula Services Implementation Evaluation.** The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) proposes to extend the timelines for the workgroup to examine implementation of the doula benefit in the Medi-Cal program from April 1, 2022, until December 31, 2023, to April 1, 2023, until June 30, 2025, to align with implementation of the benefit one year later than originally anticipated. The proposal would align the date extension with the associated evaluation report and sunset date.

**Background:** Senate Bill (SB) 65 (Skinner, Chapter 449, Statutes of 2021), in part, requires DHCS to convene a workgroup, no later than April 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023, to examine the implementation of the doula benefit in the Medi-Cal program. The workgroup is required to consider the following:

- Make certain that doula services are available to Medi-Cal beneficiaries who are eligible for and want doula services.
- Minimizing barriers and delays in payments to a Medi-Cal doula or in reimbursement to Medi-Cal recipients for doula services received.
- Making recommendations for outreach efforts so that all Medi-Cal recipients within the eligible and other target populations are aware of the option to use doula services.

No later than July 1, 2024, DHCS is required to publish a report with specified information, including recommendations to DHCS and the Legislature to reduce any identified barriers to access doula services. These dates were based on the expected doula benefit implementation date of January 1, 2022. However, to provide additional time for DHCS to work with the doula workgroup, define doula services, and allow time for managed care plans to implement the benefit, DHCS delayed implementation of doula services until January 1, 2023, in the Budget Act of 2022.

DHCS held its first meeting with the doula workgroup on March 30, 2023.

**Justification for the Change:** DHCS proposes to extend the timelines for the workgroup to examine implementation of the doula benefit in the Medi-Cal program from April 1, 2022, until December 31, 2023, to April 1, 2023, until June 30, 2025, to align with implementation of the benefit one year later than originally anticipated. DHCS proposes to extend the end date of the workgroup by 18 months (June 30, 2025, instead of December 31, 2023), which will allow time for the workgroup to review and comment on the report before its publication. The proposal will align the date extension with the associated evaluation report from July 1, 2024, to July 1, 2025, and sunset date from January 1, 2025, to January 1, 2026.

**Summary of Arguments in Support:**

- The extended timelines for the workgroup aligns the statute with the timing of the doula benefit's implementation.